RON MARLENEE
MONTANA

WASHINGTON OFFICE:
2465 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515
(202) 225-1555

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

MONTANA OFFICES:
312 9TH STREET, SOUTH
GREAT FALLS, MT 59405
(406) 453-3264

103 NORTH BROADWAY STREET
BILLINGS, MT 59101
(406) 657-6753
TOLL FREE
800-332-5965

August 4, 1989

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

William Sessions
Director
Federal Bureau of Investigations
10th and Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20535

Dear Mr. Sessions:

I have been contacted by a constituent who has some concerns about the certain federal investigations into the Church Universal Triumphant located at Corwin Springs, Montana.

I would appreciate if you could provide me with a response that fully answers the questions raised by Park County Commissioner Larry Lovely.

Thanks for your consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,

DE176 N 62-122749-

Interim Reply to Hon. Ron Marlenee dated 8-10-89 ESH:jw

Final Reply dated 9/8/89 ESH:jw

COUNTIES

BIG HORN BLAINE CARBON CARTER CASCADE CHOUTEAU CUSTER DANIELS DAWSON FALLON FERGUS GARFIELD GOLDEN VALLEY HILL JUDITH BASIN LIBERTY McCONE MEAGHER MUSSELSHELL PETROLEUM PHILLIPS PONDERA POWDER RIVER PRAIRIE RICHLAND ROOSEVELT ROSEBUD SHERIDAN STILLWATER SWEET GRASS TETON TOOLE TREASURE VALLEY WHEATLAND WIBAUX YELLOWSTONE



PARK COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

P. O. Box 1037
Livingston, Montana 59047

July 13, 1989

Congressman Ron Marlenee
409 Cannon House Office Bldg.
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Marlenee:

Recent developments, including the arrest of a Church Universal member purchasing large amounts of assault guns and ammunition, have caused concern among many members of this community. As a County Commissioner, I am also very concerned about the possibility of paramilitary activities being practiced in our area.

Although we have heard rumors of Federal Investigations, we have not received any official information. We do not feel that we need to know every detail of Federal Investigations, and if too much publicity is given to such investigations, we realize that they may be affected. We do, however, need assurance that a helpful hand is near in case such activities mushroom beyond the control of our local Sheriff's Department.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Larry Lovely

Larry Lovely
Park County Commissioner

LL/kh
cc: file

62-122749-1

ENCLOSURE

CUT official is arrested for gun deal

SPOKANE, Wash. (AP) — The purported security chief of a controversial Montana religious sect was arrested for illegally purchasing a semi-automatic assault rifle, and documents indicated he planned to outfit 200 people with paramilitary weapons, federal authorities said Monday.

At a news conference where more than a dozen assault weapons and thousands of rounds of ammunition were displayed, U.S. Attorney John Lamp said he would present the case to a federal grand jury, where additional counts could be sought against Vernon D. Hamilton.

Hamilton, 42, of Livingston, Mont., was arrested Friday for investigation of giving a false statement in the acquisition of a firearm from a Spokane firearms dealer.

Although documents found on Hamilton indicated he was the chief of security for the Church Universal and Triumphant, federal officials refused to speculate on whether his purchases were sanctioned, or paid for, by the sect that mixes Christian, New Age and survivalist philosophies.

Ed Francis, the church vice president who handles all press queries, was not in his office Monday and did not return a call.

Lamp said Hamilton could have legally purchased the semi-automatic weapons, including .50-caliber assault rifles and Austrian sniper rifles, if he had used his own name.

Authorities accused Hamilton of using the identity of a deceased San Francisco lawyer to acquire drop boxes from private mail centers in Spokane, to which ammunition and heavy boxes were mailed.

Michael C. Kelly, resident agent in charge of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, said documents found on Hamilton during his arrest indicated he had recently purchased $130,000 in military-style firearms and ammunition and had plans to spend an additional $150,000.

"There were some documents in his truck that indicated Hamilton attempted to acquire military weapons for 200 men," Kelly said.

Hamilton had been stopped for a traffic violation, and police found weapons in his vehicle. Later, more were found in a storage facility.

If convicted, Hamilton faces a maximum penalty of five years in prison and a $250,000 fine.

The church bought the 12,500-acre Royal Teton Ranch in 1981 from Malcolm Forbes. It borders the northern edge of Yellowstone Park, near Gardiner, Mont.

Since then, church has bought more property in Park County. Total holdings are about 33,000 acres.

The church preaches a mix of Christianity, New Age religion, and right-wing politics. CUT founder Elizabeth Clare Prophet has suggested in past writings and speeches that the church property in Montana would be a good place to survive a nuclear war. Many church residents have built bomb shelters on their property in rural Park County.

Church leaders have denied persistent rumors that the church is storing caches of weapons.

Gazette 7-11-89

62-122749-1

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT August 10, 1989

Honorable Ron Marlenee
House of Representatives
Washington, D. C. 20515

Dear Congressman Marlenee:

Your August 4th inquiry on behalf of Mr. Larry Lovely, Park County Commissioner, has been received. Mr. Lovely's concerns are being looked into and we will be back in touch with you as soon as possible.

Sincerely yours,

/S/

John E. Collingwood
Inspector-in-Charge
Congressional Affairs Office

2 - Salt Lake City - Enclosures (6)
Personal Attention SAC: Attached communication and your records should be reviewed and appropriate information furnished to the Bureau so that a further response can be sent to Congressman Marlenee. Your response should be submitted 10 days from receipt, to the attention of Correspondence Unit, OPA, Room 6218, Ext. 2843.
1 - [redacted]
1 - [redacted] (detached)
1 - Congressional Affairs Office

b6
b7C

MAILED 12
AUG 16 1989
FBI

DE176 62-122749-2

Exec AD Adm.
Exec AD Inv.
Exec AD LES
Asst. Dir.:
Adm. Servs.
Crim. Inv.
Ident.
Insp.
Intell.
Lab.
Legal Coun.
Off. Cong. & Public Affs.
Rec. Mgnt.
Tech. Servs.
Training
Off. Liaison & Int. Affs.
Telephone Rm.
Director's Sec'y

NOTE: Mr. LARRY LOVELY, Park County Commissioner, wrote to Congressman Marlenee regarding the arrest of a member of the Church Universal and Triumphant for purchasing large amounts of assault guns and ammunition. His community is concerned with the arrest and he is concerned about the possibility of paramilitary activities being practiced in his area. He says he has heard rumors of Federal investigations and would like assurance that a helpful hand is near in case such activities mushroom beyond the control of his local sheriff's department. Further response will be based on information provided by Salt Lake City.

ESH:rfw (10)

MAIL ROOM [redacted]

FD-36 (Rev. 8-29-85)

FBI

TRANSMIT VIA:
☐ Teletype
☐ Facsimile
☒ AIRTEL

PRECEDENCE:
☐ Immediate
☐ Priority
☐ Routine

CLASSIFICATION:
☐ TOP SECRET
☐ SECRET
☐ CONFIDENTIAL
☐ UNCLAS E F T O
☐ UNCLAS

Date 8/28/89

TO : DIRECTOR, FBI
ATTN: OFFICE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS
ROOM 6218

FROM : SAC, SALT LAKE CITY (66-31884)

SUBJECT: CONGRESSIONAL INQUIRY

Reference Congressional Affairs Office letter to Congressman MARLENEE dated August 10, 1989.

A review of the Salt Lake City and former Butte Division indices found no references or main files in Salt Lake. The following Butte references were found: 9-1375, 52-0-566, 190-197, and 196B-374. It is noted that there are no ongoing investigations involving the CHURCH UNIVERSAL TRIUMPHANT or ELIZABETH CLAIRE PROFIT.

The 9 file is a control file which contains information about the church. There are seven serials in the file, the majority of which were received from other offices. The 52 file contains a reference to the church. The 190 file is an FOIPA request made by an individual concerning the church. The 196B file is 00 Los Angeles (LA-196B-1620). The 196 matter was a lead to Butte to interview an individual regarding the CHURCH UNIVERSAL TRIUMPHANT property. The results were provided to Los Angeles along with the Butte determination that there was no fraud by wire activity being conducted by the church at the time of the RUC communication (dated 2/12/82). 62-122749 +3

Mr. LARRY LOVELY, Park County Commissioner, can be assured that if the Salt Lake City Division of the FBI becomes aware of a criminal violation within its jurisdiction, the

(2) - Bureau
1 - Los Angeles
1 - Salt Lake City
DMT:rlp
(4)

10 SEP 3 1989
10-24

Let to Hon. Ron Marlenee dated 9/8/89
EJH:jw
29

Approved: _____ Transmitted _____ (Number) _____ (Time) Per _____

matter will be investigated. Mr. LOVELY received extensive publicity because of his concern about the church, to include a recent article in Time magazine. The newspaper article that was included with Mr. LOVELY's letter to the Congressman refers to an investigation that was conducted by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms.

September 8, 1989

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

Honorable Ron Marlenee
House of Representatives
Washington, D. C. 20515

Dear Congressman Marlenee:

I am writing in further response to your August 4th inquiry on behalf of Mr. Larry Lovely, Park County Commissioner, who is concerned about the possibility of paramilitary activities being practiced in his area in view of the arrest of a Church Universal Triumphant member for purchasing large amounts of assault guns and ammunition.

The investigation to which Mr. Lovely refers and which is described in the newspaper article you enclosed was conducted by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms, not the FBI.

We appreciate Mr. Lovely's concern for the welfare of his community and want to assure him that all allegations of criminal activity received by the FBI are carefully reviewed, and appropriate action is taken should the circumstances warrant it. Also, the FBI can investigate paramilitary training camps only when actual or potential violations of Federal laws within our jurisdiction occur. When we receive information indicating that these camps are engaging in mercenary activities, we investigate accordingly within our established criteria.

MAILED 23
SEP 11 1989

We hope that if Mr. Lovely has specific information that he believes warrants an FBI investigation, he will not hesitate to contact his local FBI office.

I trust this information will assist you in responding to your constituent's questions and concerns.

Sincerely yours 62-122749-4

1 SI

John E. Collingwood
Inspector-in-Charge
Congressional Affairs Office

Exec AD Adm.
Exec AD Inv.
Exec AD LES
Asst. Dir.:
Adm. Servs.
Crim. Inv.
Ident.
Insp.
Intell.
Lab.
Legal Coun.
Off. Cong. & Public Affs.
Rec. Mgnt.
Tech. Servs.
Training
Off. Liaison & Int. Affs.
Telephone Rm.
Director's Sec'y

MAIL ROOM

1 - Salt Lake City (66-31884)
Reurairtel 8/28/89.
1 - Congressional Affairs Office
ESH:rfw (7) SEE NOTE PAGE TWO

OCT 31 1989

Honorable Ron Marlenee

NOTE: Mr. LARRY LOVELY, Park County, Montana, Commissioner, wrote to Congressman Marlenee regarding the arrest of a member of the Church Universal Triumphant for purchasing large amounts of assault guns and ammunition. He and his community are concerned with the arrest and about the possibility of paramilitary activities being practiced in Park County. LOVELY says he heard rumors of Federal investigations and would like assurance that a helpful hand is near in case such activities mushroom beyond the control of his sheriff's department. An interim response was sent to Congressman Marlenee on 8/10/89. Above response based on Salt Lake City airtel 8/28/89, which is attached behind the yellow.